

# St Mary's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	251657
<b>Inspection date</b>	10/10/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Jane Tagg
<b>Setting address</b>	Burkitt Road, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 4JJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	07929 946 053
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## **Description of the setting**

St Mary's Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of the parents of children at the playgroup. It opened in 1979 and operates from one room in Horsa's Hut at St Mary's County Primary School in Woodbridge. The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times. Morning sessions are from 9am until 12pm, children may stay for lunch between 12pm and 12.30pm and the afternoon session runs from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. The playgroup is registered for a maximum of 24 children. There are currently 32 children from three to five years on roll, all of whom receive funding for early education.

The playgroup serves the local and surrounding area. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup employ six part-time staff, all of whom have recognised early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and make good progress in their learning. There are excellent relationships between the setting and parents which impacts positively on children's care and learning. Good processes and effective implementation of policies ensure children are safe and well cared for and that their individual needs are met. The parents, staff and committee are all involved in the process of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the playgroup which has a beneficial impact on children's welfare and their progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- extend further children's skills and understanding for past events and places of interest in their own lives, for example, by exploring photographs or using a camera themselves.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children's welfare is promoted well because the established staff team are familiar with the safeguarding policies and procedures. Before adults are allowed to work unsupervised with the children, induction processes are carried out by the committee. All staff have completed training to ensure up-to-date practice informs children's safety. The health and safety officer reviews the risk assessments to help to reduce hazards to children.

The committee run playgroup has highly effective working relationships with parents. This means that children benefit in all aspects of their care and learning. These relationships are based on the commitment of the close-knit team towards this partnership working. The comprehensive key-person system means that staff are constantly available throughout the day for parents to answer any questions or share comments. The premises are well laid out, with extensive information helping to inform parents and visitors about the provision. This also promotes children's sense of belonging. The staff and management committee have a good understanding of what needs to be done to secure improvements. The new premises have greatly enhanced the provision. Improvements to the outside area mean that recommendations from previous inspections have been met. For example, they now provide large digging areas, balance beams and a quiet area to support children's learning. The parents, staff and committee are all involved in the process of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the playgroup. This ensures they can consistently improve the service they provide for children.

Children who have English as an additional language benefit from good systems to ensure their individual needs are met. Comprehensive initial documentation enables staff to gather in-depth information from parents about their children's cultures and home language. Staff work closely with parents and other involved professionals to meet the needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff have undertaken training for 'Every Child a Talker' and the playgroup has achieved an award in relation to this. The staff support young children to understand their own and others cultures and beliefs as they celebrate some festivals such as Chinese New Year and children's and staff birthdays.

Effective deployment of staff throughout the playgroup means they work successfully as a team. Staff provide positive role models for children as they share their tasks and take collective responsibility for the smooth running of sessions. The playgroup, being on one level, is accessible to all. Resources and activities are organised according to children's age and stage of development to promote their independence. Furniture and equipment is sturdy and high quality, ensuring children can move around safely in a pleasing environment. The outdoor area is well used, with a broad range of activities that cover the areas of learning. Children play outside as they wish so they can enjoy fresh air all year round.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children are very happy and motivated to learn in this friendly pre-school. They receive a warm welcome from staff when they arrive and settle easily to their play. Staff know the children in their care well and discuss their interests with them. Each child has a key person, and has also developed a high level of trust in all of the adults who care for them. As a result, they grow in confidence and show they feel extremely safe and secure. Staff help children to keep themselves safe by, for example, inviting policemen to visit the setting and practicing road safety outside with a chalked road crossing.

Children have good opportunities to learn how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They can choose healthy snacks, such as apple or banana and fresh water, from a pictorial menu throughout the session. Thorough systems identify those children who have food allergies so they eat safe and suitable food. Children show their understanding of personal cleanliness by washing their hands after playing outside. All children enjoy lots of physical exercise and fresh air throughout the session. They are familiar with the effects and benefits of exercise on their body, such as feeling out of breath. They are developing good physical skills in balancing, climbing and throwing, as they play on the climbing frame, balance beam, and throw balls into the basketball net.

The staff work as a team to promote learning through play. They plan according to children's interests, needs and individual abilities, using initial information provided by parents. For example, a child's interest in dinosaurs triggered a sorting activity according to the number of their claws. Regular observations identify children's next steps which are recorded in their learning journeys. These are shared with parents, giving an opportunity for them to respond on an ongoing basis. Staff promote committed attitudes to learning by praising children's efforts and encouraging them not to give up.

Children gain skills in technology as they use magnets, programmable toy robots and batteries. They are able to observe plants growing outside. The staff have identified that developing their learning around time and place would enhance children's learning further. Boys and girls are constantly encouraged to develop their skills in mark making through a range of activities, for example, by using chalk boards outside in the garden and wipe clean writing boards inside. They happily join in with stories and action rhymes, using percussion instruments to accompany them. They are able to talk about their own lives and feelings through circle time and role-play activities. Children benefit from range of sensory experiences. They use sand, water and dough on a daily basis, exploring textures, weights and consistencies as they have fun with pouring, scooping and cutting. They enjoy digging outside and playing with strips of cloth in the wind. Consequently, all children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

Children's behaviour is good because the adults give clear expectations and set appropriate boundaries to which the children respond. Adults remind children at circle time to use walking feet indoors and not to throw the sand. The setting has recently celebrated forty years as a committee-run pre-school. The children were able to take part in these celebrations. Children are involved in the wider community through visits to the local school. Teachers visit the pre-school and the local vet. This progresses the children's knowledge and builds relationships. All staff are committed to inclusive practice, so children are developing a respect for themselves and others.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*  
*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*  
*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*  
*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
---	-----

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
--	-----